GREATER FALL RIVER VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
HOUSEBUILDING/FACILITIES SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES
251 STONEHAVEN ROAD, FALL RIVER, MA
DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM
JUNE 4, 2026

In attendance: Paul Jennings of Westport, Joan Menard of Fall River and Donald DiBiasio of Somerset.

Also in attendance: Brian Bentley, Superintendent-Director, Leslie Weckesser, Assistant Superintendent-Principal, Jennifer DeMariano, Assistant Principal of Technical Affairs, Gregory Brilhante, Legal Counsel and Helena Neves, Executive Secretary.

Remote attendance: Jeffrey Cabral, Carpentry Instructor and Outside Projects Coordinator

The meeting began with a roll call at 5:04 p.m.

It was moved by Mr. Jennings, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to dispense with the reading of the May 12, 2026 minutes and approve them, as recorded.

Mr. DiBiasio deferred to Ms. DeMariano for the community projects update. Ms. DeMariano reported that the Community Projects Program is wrapping up another successful year of service to the communities of Fall River, Somerset, and Westport. Carpentry students installed a new directory sign at Government Center in Fall River. HVAC students are completing a project at the Fall River Fire Department, while Metal Fabrication and Welding and Facilities Maintenance Management students collaborated to complete a new road sign for Battleship Cove. Facilities Maintenance Management students are also putting the finishing touches on projects at the Westport Public Library and the Briggs Road Fire Station.

Mr. DiBiasio deferred to Mr. Cabral for the 2025–2026 Housebuilding Program update. Mr. Cabral reported that the siding and deck have been completed. Electrical and plumbing work are awaiting inspections scheduled for the following week. Fire alarm and HVAC testing have been completed and approved. The final inspection for certificate of occupancy is tentatively scheduled for June 15th or 16th. The open house is scheduled for June 22, 2026.

Mr. DiBiasio began the discussion of the 26/27 Housebuilding Program and reported that two applications have been received. The first application is for a house to be located at 21 Seaview Avenue in Fall River. The second proposal is for a property located at 25 Devol Pond Drive in Westport. The plans for both houses were reviewed.

Mr. Cabral reported that the Fall River homeowner is not willing to modify the current house plans. The Westport homeowner, however, understood the District's concerns regarding compliance with the Massachusetts Building Code and selected a new, more efficient design that meets code requirements. The proposed Westport home is a 1,950-square-foot, one-level modern farmhouse with a 576-square-foot attached garage, three bedrooms, and two bathrooms. Minor structural, architectural, and MEP adjustments remain, and a site plan is being developed. Additional work with the homeowner and architect will be needed regarding mechanical, electrical, and plumbing details and locations, as well as certain window and door sizes and trim details to coordinate with the selected siding. The septic and well have been installed and approved.

Mr. Cabral noted that the roof design is complex and will likely require the roof trusses and shingles to be subcontracted. He also recommends subcontracting the sheetrock and plaster work while reserving one or two rooms for students to develop those skills. The kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities will be constructed and installed by students. Overall, Mr. Cabral stated that the Westport project would provide an excellent opportunity for students to develop trade skills.

Mr. DiBiasio asked whether Mr. Cabral had viewed the property and if he had any concerns regarding accessibility for students. Mr. Cabral stated that he had not viewed the property but has no concerns.

Mr. Jennings asked Mr. Cabral whether the proposed house is a viable project for students to build. Mr. Cabral stated that it is a viable project, provided the roof work is subcontracted. Mr. Jenn ings commended Mr. Cabral for addressing the issues and putting appropriate measures in place. Mr. Cabral noted that clear boundaries have been established so homeowners understand the plans and expectations.

Mr. DiBiasio noted that he would like to see an application for an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) considered for next year's project. Mr. Cabral agreed that it was a great idea but noted that it would require significant advance planning due to local zoning requirements. Attorney Brilhante noted that ADUs are covered under state law, but local government agencies control their approval. Mr. Cabral added that utilities would be the biggest concern, as they may need to be connected to the main house.

It was moved by Mr. Jennings, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to recommend to the School Committee approval of the 25 Devol Pond Drive, Westport, project as the 2026–2027 Housebuilding Project.

It was moved by Mr. Jennings, seconded by Ms. Menard, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted
Helena S. Neves
Helena S. Neves, Executive Secretary

Materials Included:
May 12, 2026 minutes
Community Projects List